

DIVISION AVENUE FORM BASED CODE

September, 2015

Why Form Based Code?

- ▶ **City of Kentwood** adopted 2012 Master Plan references Form Based Code (FBC) with respect to Division Avenue
 - ▶ Specifically references need for FBC for Division to allow for higher densities and mixed use to make best use of the Bus Rapid Transit line
 - ▶ Master Plan calls Division Avenue a Transit Oriented Development or “TOD” area. TODs encourage mixed use and higher densities
 - ▶ Master Plan says TODs will encourage walkability and accessibility, which FBC has been known to accomplish
 - ▶ The Sub Area Plan for Division Avenue requires the use of a FBC. The genesis of the FBC for Division Avenue was initiated with a 2008 community charrette undertaken in conjunction with the city of Wyoming. This effort involved commissioners from both communities, businesses and residents in determining that the FBC would be a good fit for the cities.
 - ▶ Wyoming is also planning a FBC for its side of Division; Grand Rapids already uses FBC along Division Avenue

Why Form Based Code?

The **City of Wyoming** Land Use Plan 2020 (adopted in 2006) identifies the need to reinvigorate Division Avenue by adding more residents, pedestrian supportive commercial uses and streetscape improvements. To accomplish this, the following is recommended:

- ▶ Redevelop and combine underutilized or marginal properties with residential, thereby increasing the population to support businesses, improve transit use, and focus on aesthetics.
- ▶ Provide an opportunity for live-work units as part of a mixed use concept.
- ▶ Incorporate ground floor retail and office uses with residential above.
- ▶ Encourage and promote two and three story buildings, especially at major intersections.
- ▶ Implement an architectural theme that is based on strong design principals stressing quality materials.
- ▶ Permit residential densities higher than that of surrounding single-family neighborhoods.
- ▶ Emphasize a development pattern that safely and comfortably accommodates pedestrians by providing sidewalks to the bike trails and public transit.
- ▶ Continue implementing streetscape improvements along Division Avenue.

What is Form Based Code?

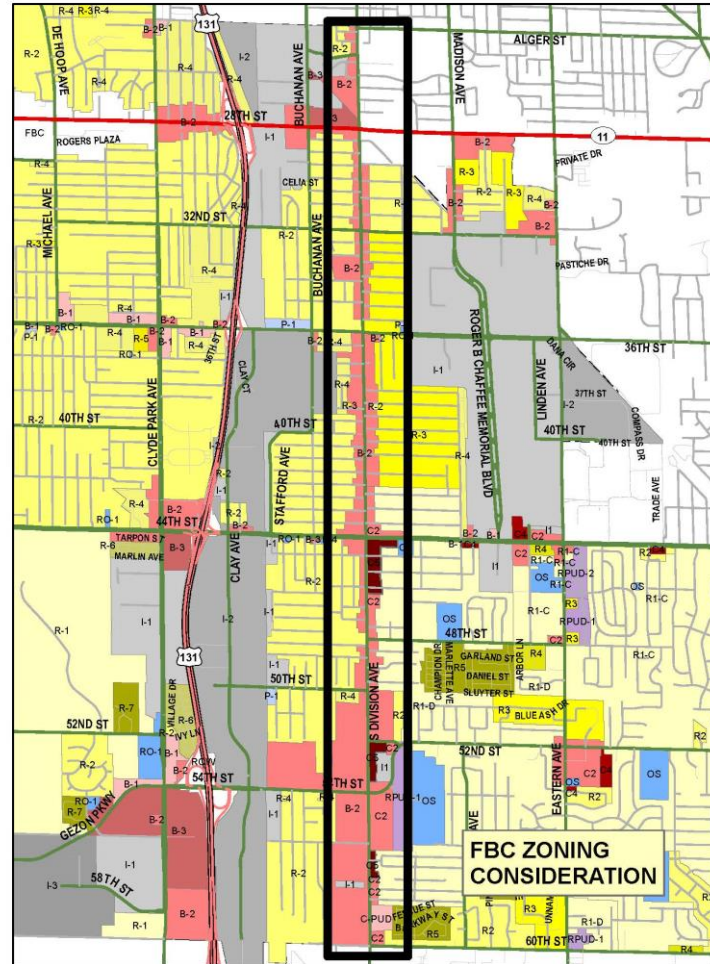
Put simply, a form-based code is a way to regulate development that controls building form first and building use second.

Key Differences	
Traditional Zoning	Form Based Codes
Use-based	De-emphasize use
Districts	Neighborhoods/streets
Emphasis on individual uses of property, rigid use of lot size & building placement	Emphasis on building relationships & on fitting building to its use & surroundings
Segregation of land uses	Mixed uses
Uniformity in neighborhoods	Diversity in neighborhoods
Limited ability to effect change	Ability to transform or preserve
Limited design standards	Focus on building/site form
Setbacks	Build to lines
Focus on site; little on right-of-way	Attention to street & streetscape

Why Form Based Code?

- ▶ Form Based Code is being considered for Division Avenue to accomplish the following:
 - ▶ Make better use of limited property depth along Division
 - ▶ Allow for orientation to pedestrians rather than cars
 - ▶ Fewer rules related to use-more opportunity for development on Division
 - ▶ Will bring some building setbacks into compliance.
 - ▶ Could allow greater densities than the city currently permits—this will help to support the area businesses and create demand for nearby goods and services
 - ▶ More control over building type, placement and appearance—developers will know what to expect upfront

FBC Zoning Consideration



Historic Division Avenue

- ▶ The Division Avenue corridor historically was the major shopping center for the area.
- ▶ Large grocery stores, department stores, home improvement store, malls, shifting traffic patterns, made it difficult for Division Avenue stores to remain competitive. A pattern of disinvestment and vacancy was established; there are still MANY vacant properties on Division
- ▶ One significant change to the area is the introduction of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). The BRT will allow people to live in the area without having a car. This is attractive to young people and elderly or anyone who does not want the expense of a car. If more people live in the area, there will be more demand for services.



Why should the FBC work here?

- ▶ Bus Rapid Transit has made the area more accessible to people who do not need cars to get to their daily activities.
- ▶ Area is attractive to residential developers; there has already been interest in developing residential mixed use in the area.
- ▶ Residents want access to goods and services that are walking distance from their homes. Businesses along Division will have more access to the customers living in the area.

Example of the use of Form Based Code





Before: typical existing conditions produced by the conventional zoning system.



Form-based code: new standards for the public realm & private development.



After: potential private development following new form-based standards.



Current conditions on Division Avenue....



Current conditions

► *Inadequate lot size and depth for current zoning*

A redeveloped site could not meet the current zoning requirement; conformance with current zoning would require acquisition of properties to the east



Current conditions

While these buildings do not meet the existing zoning, they are generally set close to the street, consistent with the desired FBC.

If this area were redeveloped, both building and parking would have to be set back 35 feet; the building would also have to be 30 feet from the rear lot line.



Current conditions

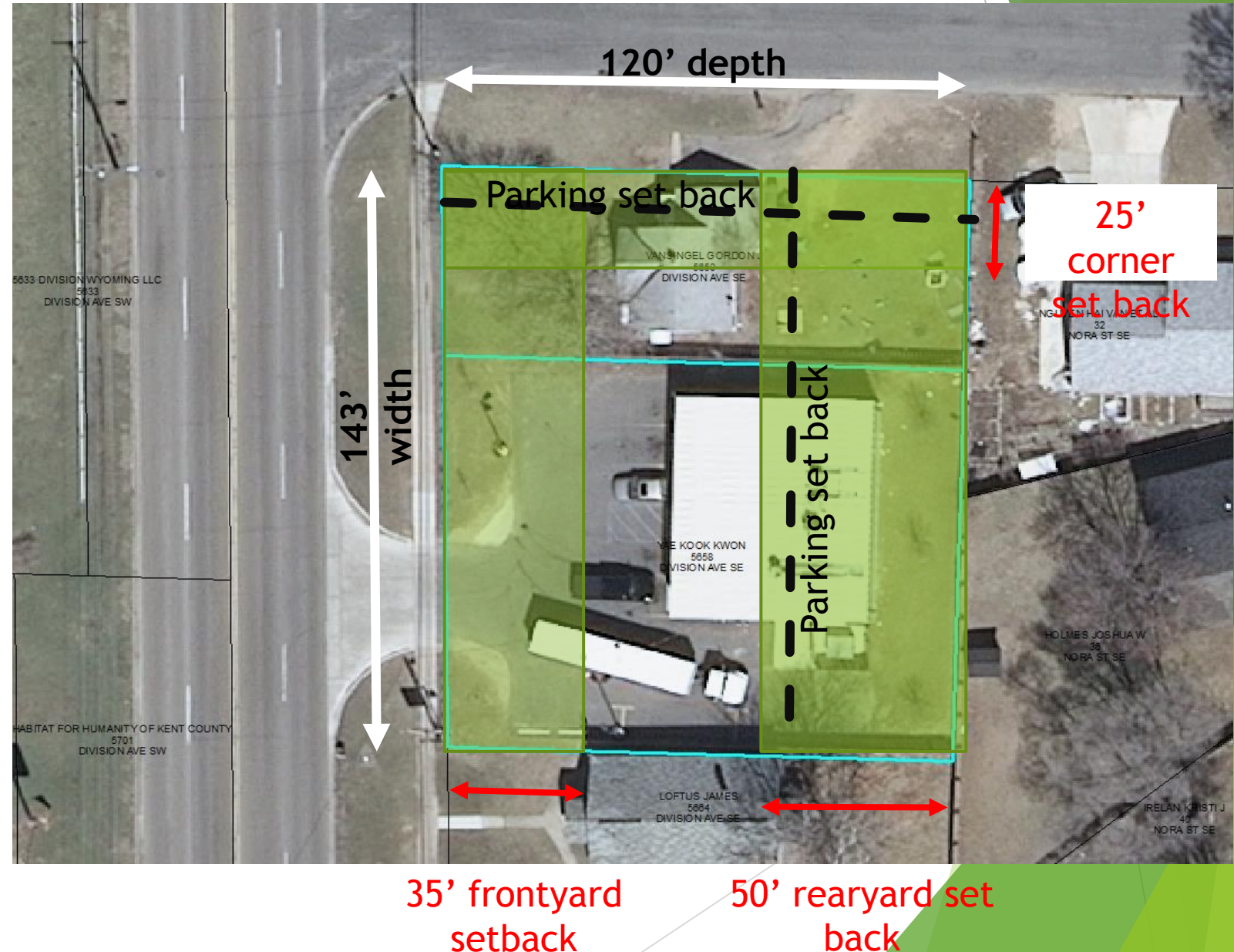
- *Inadequate set back to meet current standards*



Current conditions

A typical lot on Division Avenue abuts single family residential uses.

The required setbacks, parking standards and lot sizes would make it difficult to redevelop properties.



Current conditions

► *Inadequate parking for current zoning requirements.*

A few have incorporated parking behind the business, adjacent to residential uses. The Bus Rapid Transit should reduce the number of parking spaces needed.



Parking lot behind stores near
44th and Division



Required parking should be able
to be reduced along Division
due to BRT

Current conditions

- *Parking lots and pavement make the area unattractive for pedestrians.*



Current conditions

- *Blank walls create disconnect between buildings and sidewalks*

Many stores do not incorporate windows, and blank walls face the public streets and sidewalks



Current conditions



Architectural elements do not meet proposed FBC standards

No windows, lack of street trees, overhead utilities make this area less attractive to pedestrians.

Part of the goal of Form Based Code is to make Division Avenue attractive to pedestrians and encourage use of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

People living near the BRT can reduce their reliance on their cars. Their walking commute to and from the BRT gives more exposure and opportunity for Division Avenue businesses.



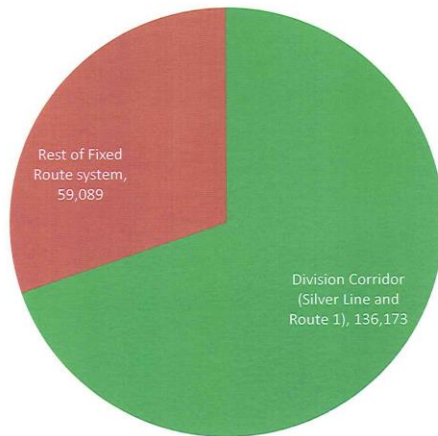
Silver Line - Bus Rapid Transit



So how many people are using the BRT anyway?

The Silver Line and Fixed Route Ridership Increase

Fixed Route Ridership Increase since Silver Line Opening

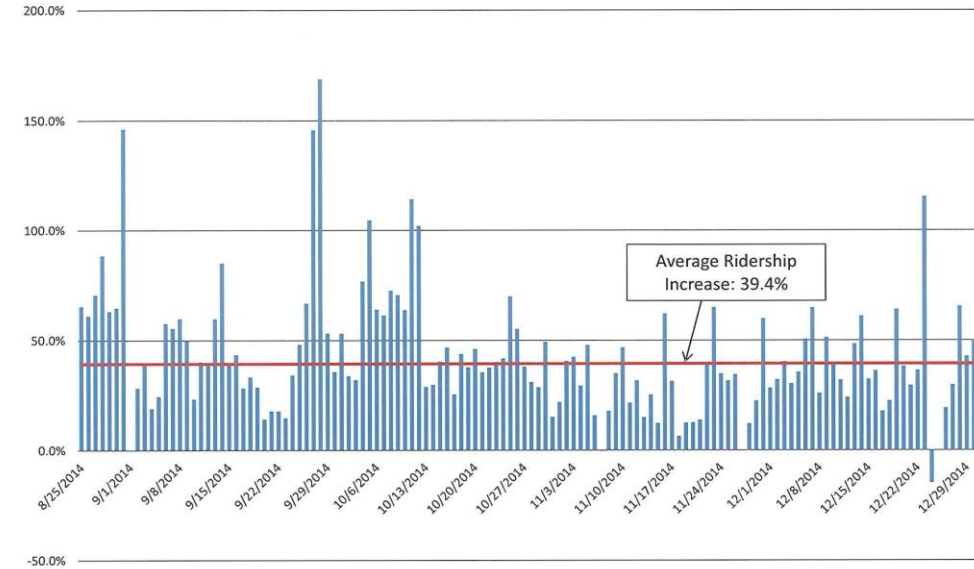


Since the Silver Line opened, **70%** of The Rapid's Fixed Route ridership increase has come from the Division Avenue Corridor (Silver Line and Route 1 – Division)



Silver Line Ridership Analysis

% Increase in Division Avenue Corridor Ridership



The average ridership in the Division Avenue corridor has increased by **39.4%**. Since the Silver Line opened, **70%** of the Rapid's fixed route ridership has come from the Division Ave corridor (Silver Line and Route1).

Existing uses on Division Avenue

The suburban development that has developed on Division Avenue is oriented to the automobile rather than the pedestrian.

Form Based Code is geared to an urban setting, oriented to the pedestrian.



Existing uses on Division Avenue

There are many vacant buildings on Division Avenue. The BRT will create a market for different types of businesses than in the past. The FBC will offer an opportunity for a large variety of businesses or residential uses to locate along Division Avenue—as the market demands.



Existing uses on Division Avenue

There are undeveloped properties on Division.

Form Based Code could maximize development of the site, because it allows more dense commercial development and increases the types of uses permitted.



Existing Uses on Division Avenue

- ▶ *Division Avenue currently is a commercially zoned district that does not allow residential uses.*
- ▶ The FBC would open Division Avenue up to residential uses. There has already been interest on Division Avenue for residential uses. Residents would generate more demand for goods and services, and would likely rely on the BRT for at least some of their transportation needs.
- ▶ FBC allows for the opportunity for both commercial and residential uses in the area, and would allow mixed uses within buildings.

Types of residential uses include the following:

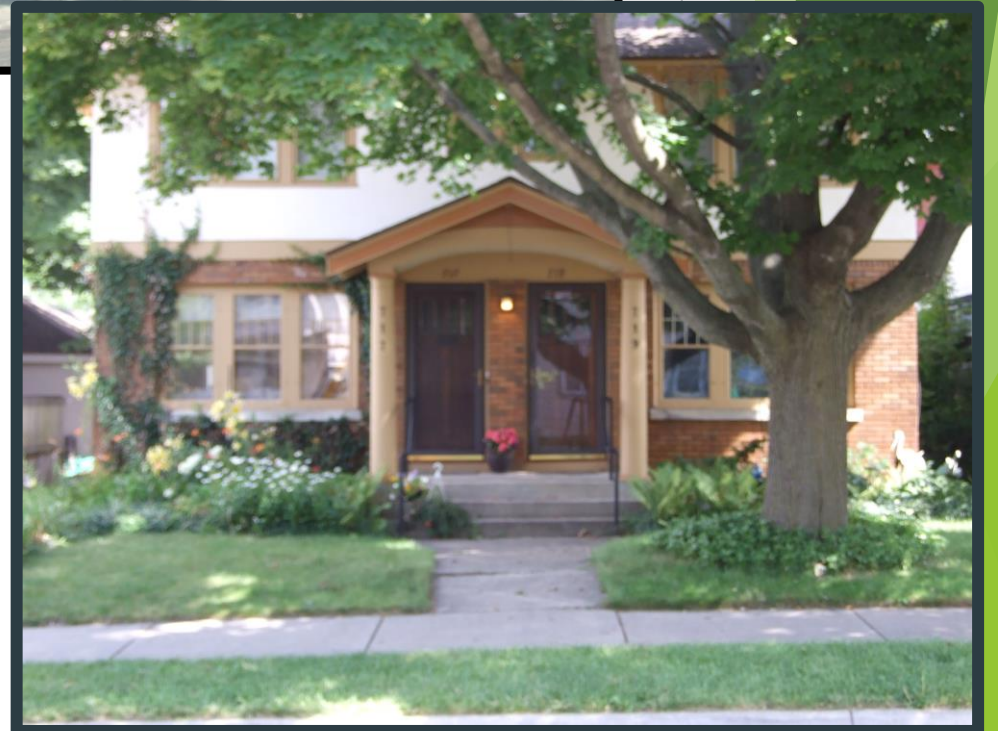
Mixed Use



Apartment building



Two family



Rowhouse



How does the existing development pattern fit into the proposed FBC?

Many areas of Division already have characteristics consistent with the FBC



36th SW corner



Wide concrete sidewalk

Bus access

Street trees/ planters

Windows

Bike racks



43rd Street



Wide sidewalk

Street trees

Storefront close to sidewalk

Parking in the side yard

43rd and Division

Buildings up close to road

Upper story office or could be residential—mixed use

Windows across frontage

Recessed door

Architectural elements

Street trees



5300 block Division



Set back near street

Transparency (windows)
consistent with FBC
requirement

Projecting signs would be
allowed under FBC

Burt Street at Division

Set back close to street at edge of sidewalk

Wide concrete sidewalk

Cornice at roofline

Transparency (windows) consistent with FBC

Street trees

Side yard parking—
although screening would
be required



Calhoun Street



Set back close to
the street at edge
of sidewalk

Wide concrete
sidewalk

Transparency
(windows)
consistent with FBC

Biggby - 5301 Division Avenue

Architectural style can make a difference



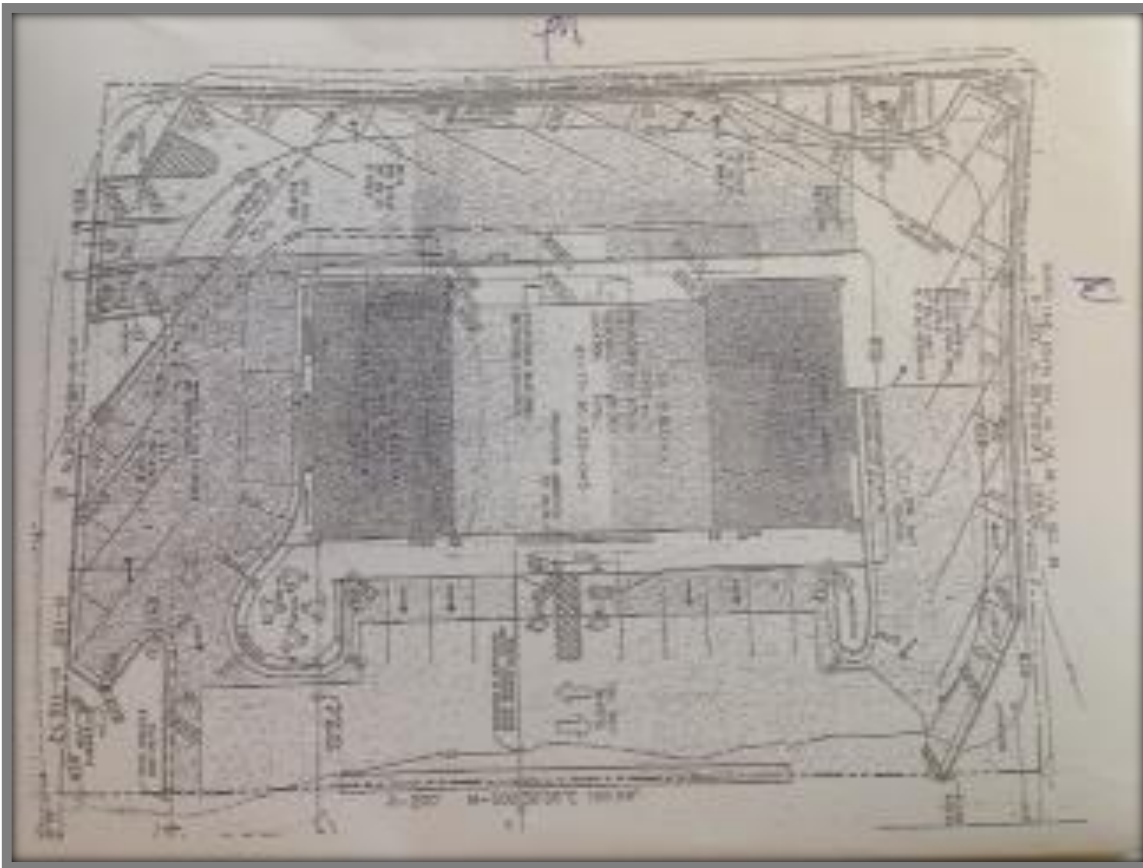
Before



After

Biggby - 5301 Division

This property was developed generally in accordance with the Form Based code that is being planned for Division Avenue. This particular zone allows for buildings to be set back 50'.



Division at Bellevue



Includes many architectural elements consistent with FBC

Examples of the application of Form Based Code





Since much of Division Avenue is developed, change will occur incrementally.

Progression of improvement where the same store with same setback becomes more attractive with the addition of wider sidewalks, street lights, and trees.



Transition of an area to a more walkable and livable area.



FBC would open up allowable uses to include residential or commercial—offering more opportunity for development. More density=more people =more demand for retail and other services

Steps to accomplish FBC

- ▶ Public information sessions with property owners, neighbors, city officials, public
- ▶ Prepare FBC and determine where the new regulations will apply
- ▶ Meeting for input from property owners, neighbors, city officials, and public
- ▶ Planning Commission hearing
- ▶ City Commission hearing
- ▶ Ordinance adopted

Questions?

Thank You!